

# Colusa Subreach Planning Project Advisory Workgroup

## Draft Meeting Summary

### March 7, 2005 – Colusa County Farm Bureau

**Summary prepared by Carolyn Penny, Facilitator, Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions with assistance from Ellen Gentry, Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum**

**Present:**

AW: Annalena Bronson, Burt Bundy, Gary Evans, Michael Fehling, Rebecca Fris, John Garner, Armand Gonzales, Francis Hickle, Pat Kittle, Dan Obermeyer, Jeff Sutton, and Jon Wrysinski.

Alternates: Greg Golet (Alternate for Dawit Zeleke), Greg Mensik (Alternate for Kelly Moroney), and Joan Phillipe (Alternate for John Rogers).

Staff: Facilitator Carolyn Penny, Project Manager Gregg Werner, Ellen Gentry (SRCAF)

Guests: Beverly Anderson-Abbs, Michelle Baker (Common Ground), Kim Davis, and Dee Ohliger.

**Agenda as Proposed:**

Agenda Item	Approximate Start Time	Lead Person	Topic	Outcome
1.	10:00	Carolyn Penny, Facilitator	Welcome, Introductions, February Meeting Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions.</li> <li>• Approve agenda.</li> <li>• Approve Feb. summary.</li> </ul>
2.	10:10	All	Public Meeting Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss meeting dynamics, information, and implications for AW.</li> </ul>
3.	11:10	Gregg Werner, All	Subreach Background Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide final feedback.</li> </ul>
4.	11:30	Public	Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive comment from the public.</li> </ul>
5.	11:45	All	Lunch and Break	
6.	12:15	Gregg Werner, All	Visual Tour of Facilities and Land Use of Subreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain picture of facilities and land use throughout subreach.</li> </ul>
7.	12:30	All	AW-Identified Studies Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine and prioritize list of possible AW-Identified Studies.</li> </ul>
8.	1:15	All	Review AW ground rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and confirm AW ground rules.</li> </ul>

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9.	1:30	All	March Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop plans and logistics for March workshop.</li></ul>
10.	1:45	Carolyn Penny, All	April Agenda and Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shape April agenda and articulate interim steps.</li></ul>
11.	2:00	Carolyn Penny	Adjourn	

### February AW Summary

Francis reported not receiving hard mail summary of last meeting. Jon asked that he be included on hard mail list. The AW noticed that the February notes need to indicate Ron Withrow attended as Alternate for John Garner. A suggestion was made regarding Ayres & Associates (page 5) adding: “to provide overview of hydraulic modeling approaches.” Carolyn agreed to recirculate the February AW notes with those changes. With those changes, the AW agreed to the meeting summary as final.

### Public Meeting Debriefing

Francis reported there were many local concerns still awaiting answers and resolutions before there will be buy-in (i.e., more habitat, banks removed downstream, maintenance of channel/reach below, and the effect on capacity of the river). He proposed working together and wanted answers in return before moving forward. He discussed the loss of duck clubs, boat ramps, property taken off tax rolls, untrustworthy studies on salmon and the money they can generate in a community, what he felt were flawed impact studies and the cost. He expressed doubt as to whether he will continue participating.

Jeff added his concern for maintenance and the need to take care of the flood control system. He remarked that nothing has been done. He stated that minds are not going to change and that restoration is not wanted. He suggested that getting landowner assurances first and in place would make people more comfortable, and that safeguards are needed before proceeding.

Burt commented that the statement “nothing has been done” is misleading. Many projects worked on through SRCAF have not occurred because they did not meet the criteria. Looking at requirements, hydraulic impacts, and other project changes is part of the process. SRCAF has made progress. The Comprehensive Study put in place a way for local projects to move forward (i.e., Hamilton City flood control project).

Joan expressed an advantage of not having a history with this issue. She heard a lack of communication in the past, and concerns not being taken to heart.

Although he did not attend the public meeting, John Garner commented that he has received phone calls regarding the meeting. He indicated that members of the community have mistrust due to past bad experiences with agencies and a “wait and see” approach. He desired a good response for community members who ask him if he is selling out by participating in the AW.

Pat discussed how the river was changed when levees were put in and not maintained. When agencies made changes to the river, those changes affected lives and experiences and left a sense of mistrust.

Greg Golet added that in the past, people didn't recognize advancements and impacts that would take place. Up until now, studies have focused north of Colusa. There are rigorous scientific efforts and multiple benefits with strong stakeholder support. There's an unrealistic desire to have answers immediately. It takes time.

Rebecca reported on the Landowner Assurances Committee and their work on the Good Neighbor Policy (GNP). The valid, understood and general comment from the public is what CALFED is looking for. She stated that restoration can occur without compromising the flood control system. Funds for land purchases are directed to multi-purpose uses; there's no limitation as long as the purchase meets restoration goals.

Gary questioned whether SB1086 allows for CSP mission statement changes to quell phone calls. He has been hearing concerns regarding flood control, landowner assurance, public access and recreation opportunities, in that order.

Dan restated the role of the AW; to advise the components of the program.

Burt informed the group that the eight site-specific properties have owners with property rights and that within the law they can do what they want as all landowners can. As landowners, they must abide by laws regarding flood control by the Reclamation Board, zoning and planning regulations by the county, and other state and federal laws. Burt stated that this project can note adjacent owner's concerns and then address, minimize and alleviate those concerns through this public process. Through this project, AW can make a difference by studying and modeling the area, then recommending whether, or what the design and type of restoration would be, while also improving public access, public use and the economics of the area.

Jeff reiterated that at the public meeting a representative of CALFED said if there's no local support it will not be funded. He agreed private property rights have to be respected; however, TNC is using taxpayer money for restoration and is circumventing opposition. He states that it is our money and our private property as well.

Dan pointed out that individual taxpayers do not have the ability to say where our taxes go.

Annalena recommended reading the DWR white paper on flood management, noting that the river and levees are important and the problems described are real regarding maintaining the system. She mentioned the government pulling back and leaving agencies to follow laws without resources.

Jeff expressed further concern that more habitat is causing more problems, the system is in disrepair, the dialogue has continued for a long time (four years), nothing has come to fruition, and that restoration is being credited to water exporters as mitigation (yet causing redirected flood control, agricultural, and economic impacts to rural communities.)

Annalena noted that TNC is applying to CALFED for monitoring information which will be available for CSP to use. She noted Jeff's pessimism, but shared her hope and the need for his cooperation.

Burt stated that through available funding there is a great opportunity for CSP to look at flood capacity and hydraulic questions. He briefly discussed the Legaci grant and legal help to put in place an incentive-based program for landowners along the river. He noted that Jeff has been involved and part of those discussions. Burt stated that he could see the possibility of a pilot program in the Colusa Subreach that develops a Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle agreement to allow for incidental take and deal with flood control maintenance. There is a proposal to tie into CSP, and a commitment from agencies. He noted that restoration may not be needed in some places, but that the group needs to move forward. He pointed out that this process is how we help the community and rebuild trust.

John Garner favored a "win-win" proposal of three policies in place addressing the subreach: 1) cleaning woody debris on site, 2) public access from river with trails and signs, including local touring, nature tours, local prosperity, and public access back down to the river, 3) the GNP with farmers given first option that they could farm the first x feet of a restoration site which predators would eat before their orchards, or that farmers be paid for these first feet of their property.

Armand felt it was a good idea to work with property owners and make restoration feasible, but pointed out that funds are unavailable. He mentioned that public access is a shared goal and that subject to legislature all three ideas from John G. are worth investigating. Recommendations can always be taken to lawmakers. He pointed out that not all restoration money comes from CALFED, and that there are restrictions on how to spend the money.

Francis requested Fish & Game's support instead of opposition. He supported the agencies speaking with a cohesive voice to address the barriers to more cooperative restoration.

Carolyn posed the question if members were still on board for the AW.

Francis was willing to stay on, but needs a mutually agreed upon commitment before 2007, buy-in from agencies, progress, something in writing, and something to take back to the public.

Jeff thought the GNP should be completed and set first.

Greg Golet mentioned tangible benefits for the public and constituents (i.e., focused effort to study policy specifically impacting VELB, new planting being regulatory and implementing mitigation for necessary maintenance).

John Garner was willing to stay with buy-in from TNC and agencies to change policies of CALFED for mitigation, maintenance, and predation.

Carolyn noted a possible area of AW guidance: AW wants to demonstrate tangible benefits to everyone at the table, including the community at large.

Greg Mensik explained that a bureaucracy, creating many policies and regulations, cannot implement everything. He expressed the desire to listen and do what he can. Funding is expected to get worse in

the future, and bureaucracies often take a long time to address issues. What this process does do is provide a chance to work out some solutions. He pointed out there is no US Fish and Wildlife property on the map. Colusa is not interested in refuge property, yet there's progress. The process doesn't go away if you choose to not participate. Groups like this are important

### **Public Comment**

Kim Davis, Senator Aanestad's office, has been involved for 11 years. She commented there is money for environmental issues, but not flood control. Agencies and people of authority are needed to change legislature. We are in the worst financial crunches. Moving forward would get a buy-in, and that there has to be buy-in. She stated that tangible agreements will help build trust.

Dee Ohliger felt the public meeting was frustrating, because the agencies had zero answers. She expressed concern for the care of the river.

Francis, speaking as a member of the public, asked about the status for the boat launch committee, possible recreation area, campsites, parameters of funding, etc. He asked whether the Ward property could be considered as a possible public use and restoration site.

In answer to Francis, Gregg referred to the Ward property plan handout, given at the first meeting, discussing the possibilities of trails, an interpretative center, campground, etc.

In response to Francis, Rebecca stressed CALFED land purchases are interested in multi purpose, with no limitation as long as restoration goals are met.

### **Changes to Public Meeting Summary**

The following changes were made: 1) Don not Dan Strifler in attendance, 2) Lewis Bair is the Manager West Side Levee District and RD 108. Also add comment: "Need to improve flood control system to get local buy-in", 3) 55% (pg 5) was the amount referred to by Glenn Huffman, 4) Rebecca (pg 5) re: community support, add: "We also have an extensive proposal review process of which local involvement and support is an important component", 5) Add: "Approximately 90 attended including those who signed in".

Francis requested Ben see a copy before it goes out since he was relaying some of Ben's changes. He also requested the notes go out to the AW and then to those in attendance.

There was a brief discussion regarding the public notice for the meeting, email, hard copies, and posting flyers at community gathering places.

### **Lunch Break**

### **Wrap-Up of Morning Discussion**

Dan expressed concern when he hears the word commitment and commitment to a solution that hasn't been defined. The purpose of the forum and the committee doesn't jive with a discussion regarding state

and federal agencies. CSP is to do what we can do within the framework. Anything else is outside the scope of work.

Pat asked if the Army Corps should be involved as well as legislative people. He noted that it was important to find ways for everyone involved to gain from the process.

Burt recommended being realistic in terms of expectations, what can be accomplished (i.e., snags) and what the impact would be within Colusa Subreach dealing with these specific properties.

Dan suggested the resolution is to work on a solution for the CSP plan.

Greg Golet noted the evolution of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge from north to south, and noted that there will be a great deal of public access when the Comprehensive Conservation Plan becomes final. Similarly, with the Hamilton City project, there was extensive input from local landowners that covered multiple benefits.

Annalena described Hamilton City as the model, noting improvements can be made to benefit lots of different interests.

Burt mentioned that in the 1980s Congress authorized the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge for 18000 acres and the USF&WS will keep acquiring land for public access and public use.

Gregg pointed out that CSP is to look at not just possible restoration at 8 sites, but a strategy for the whole of the subreach. Ultimately there will be a better overall product, not just restoration. TNC recognizes if there aren't answers and trade offs, then they won't have broad-based support. The AW will help define the habitat restoration plan.

Francis suggested redirecting funds as an indication that AW is accomplishing something tangible. He requested a copy of the budget review (scheduled for next meeting).

### **Subreach Background Report**

Jeff stated that the subreach background report lacks balance in that it fails to mention damage caused by river meander to agriculture water diversion hard points and needs to present both sides including economic details and the scope of economic impacts. He stated a concern that reports such as the subreach background report get cited as comprehensive when they are not.

Jeff and Francis suggested that additional information to fill the gaps, especially the economic information gaps, could be retrieved from the irrigation district, reclamation district, city councils and agriculture commissioners. They requested that the report remain in draft form so that it can be treated as a working document.

Gregg noted 3 reasons for the subreach background report:

1. Put collected info in one place for AW
2. Info for public on project in one place
3. Info for sub-contractors in one place.

He also noted that the report is due to CALFED as a deliverable on March 15.

It was determined that existing concerns and conditions would be listed, and the background report would be considered as a working draft report. Gregg will meet with Jeff regarding information in the report. Burt supported adding a chapter that lists local concerns. Gregg will email the contract agent for the project regarding a shift in timeline.

### **March Workshop**

The AW agrees that workshop is a good idea, but it wants to delay timing until it sees a specific need. Members mentioned the possibilities of June or July, including a June AW picnic.

### **April Agenda**

Items for discussion, requested in order of priority, included:

Subreach Report

Budget Review

AW Identified Studies

Visual Tour

Ground rules and Meeting Schedule

### **Next Steps**

- Ellen will revise public meeting summary based on AW comments and send the revised document to Carolyn and Ben for review. Goal for distribution to participants is within 2 weeks.
- Gregg checks with CALFED regarding revision of a timeline for the subreach report and the possibility of leaving subreach report “draft.”
- Gregg and Jeff will review subreach background report – omissions, outline, resources - and talk before the April meeting.

The AW would like discussion of the USFWS restoration; 206 acres just above Princeton at Drumhiller Slough on a future agenda.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 4, 10:00-2:00, at Colusa Farm Bureau